

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 07173 060948Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00

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-----121364 061038Z /14

R 060757Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4231

CONFIDENTIAL CANBERRA 7173

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR AS
SUBJECT: CONTRACT OPERATION AT NAVCOMSTA HAROLD E. HOLT

REF: (A) STATE 143115; (B) CANBERRA 4588

1. REF (A) ASKED FOR EMBASSY'S VIEWS ABOUT LIKELY REACTION TO PROPOSAL TO SWITCH OVER TO CIVILIAN CONTRACT OPERATION (VS. US NAVY "BLUE-SUITERS"). OUR INITIAL REACTION WAS (A) THIS ISN'T A VERY GOOD TIME TO BE RAISING THIS PROPOSAL; (B) DEPENDS ON WHETHER YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT AN AUSTRALIAN CONTRACTOR OR A U.S. CONTRACTOR AND (C) IT'S A MATTER THAT WOULD REQUIRE CLOSEST CONSULTATION WITH GOA.

2. IF DEPARTMENT WISHES US TO PURSUE THE IDEA OF CONTRACT OPERATION AT NAVCOMSTA AT HAROLD E. HOLD, WE BELIEVE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS WOULD PROBABLY BE AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY. IF WE DO BROACH THE MATTER WITH ADOD, IT SHOULD BE WITH THE THOUGHT THAT THE VERY FIRST RPT FIRST QUESTION THEY WILL ASK IS WHETHER THE CONTRACTOR WILL BE AUSTRALIAN. SECOND QUESTION WILL BE WHAT IMPACT DO WE EXPECT SWITCH-OVER TO HAVE ON TOWN OF EXMOUTH.

ACTION REQUESTED: VIEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON WHETHER YOU WISH US TO PURSUE THE MATTER WITH ADOD.

ALSTON

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PAGE 02 CANBER 07173 060948Z

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONTRACTS, MILITARY BASES, COMMUNICATION LINES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 sep 1978
Decapton Date: 01 jan 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CANBER07173
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780362-0727
Format: TEL
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780999/aaaadeen.tel
Line Count: 55
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9685fa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 143115, 78 CANBERRA 4588
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1535085
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONTRACT OPERATION AT NAVCOMSTA HAROLD E. HOLT
TAGS: MARR, AS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9685fa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014